

The Festival of Sts. Peter and Paul, Apostles
The Five-year Anniversary of the Parish
St. Matthew 16:13-20
June 29th, 2018
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

On This Rock I Will Build My Church

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Lord + Jesus Christ says in the Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Matthew, "On this Rock I will build My Church." There are those who believe those words refer to the person who said it, St. Peter. But this not the case. The Lord + Jesus is going to build His Church upon the Words of St. Peter, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." In other words, our Lord is going to be the foundation of the Church. He is the chief cornerstone. He is the foundation. Upon Him and His Word the Church has its bedrock.

Therefore, as we celebrate our fifth anniversary as a parish we too need to remind ourselves (and this should happen whenever we remember the reason this parish was founded) upon Whom our parish is founded, and upon Whose Word our parish is founded. The parish of Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession was founded upon preaching the Christ, our Lord + Jesus, as the One, True and Only Savior of the whole world. We dedicated ourselves to preaching Him in His truth. Confessing that only He was "the Christ, the Son of the Living God" who came down from Heaven to take upon Himself our flesh, so that He might fulfill the Law perfectly for us and suffer our punishment on the tree of the holy cross.

We also dedicated ourselves to using the means, which our Lord instituted for us, in the way that He intended us to use them. We baptize in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost all those who come or are brought to the font. We forgive the sins of all those who are penitent in the words of absolution. And, we retain the sins of those who persist in their sin and remain impenitent. We offer the Lord's Body and Blood in bread and wine to those confess the same things that we do, and who have joined our fellowship, and who believe that the Lord's Body and Blood are truly present in the sacrament in, with and under the bread and wine. We withhold the Lord's Supper from those outside of our confession and fellowship out of love for them, so that the sacrament may not be scorned, and that more importantly, so that those outside of our confession are not eating and drinking damnation upon themselves.

These things our parish has been doing faithfully for five years. It is surely only a short time, but it is a good time to remind ourselves what we are to be doing, and for what purpose: to continue to build upon His foundation the Church of God in this location. If we continue to remind ourselves every year,

every five, ten, fifty, or hundred years, we will continue to remain faithful by God's grace for we will pass these things along to those who will take the reigns of this parish after we have been called to our eternal home in Heaven. The task does not change those the years may come and go. We continue to preach Christ crucified for us and all mankind, and that those who believe on Him are justified, are forgiven of their sins and have eternal life and salvation.

Built upon the rock of our Lord + Jesus Christ, the Church in the world stands. Built upon the rock of our Lord + Jesus Christ, this parish will continue to stand, even if there are only two or three members gathered around our Lord's Name. For, He has promised that He would be there in our midst, even if such a small number be present. This we should believe and take to heart, for our Lord does not lie. This is why we as individuals should only be concerned with our own confession and making sure that what we believe and confess is the truth. For, if we continue to do what our Lord has given us to do—preach the Word and administer the Sacraments—we will remain in the faith. The Lord will grant His Word to be planted in those who would hear, through our faithful preaching the word and administering the sacraments. The Holy Ghost will give increase in His own time and in His own way.

The name chosen for this parish five years ago is Saints Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. The Apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul are perfect names for our parish, for Saint Peter preached to the Jews the good news of what our Lord + Jesus Christ had done for them. He was an eyewitness to the events. He preached what he knew and had seen. And many believed on the Lord + Jesus and were baptized. The same is true of Saint Paul. He preached to the Gentiles, and the Jews in the dispersion. Many who heard him believed on the Lord + Jesus and were baptized.

There were those who did not believe, who questioned the truth and refused to believe. The same is even true of the twelve apostles. Judas Iscariot refused to trust in the Lord + Jesus for salvation and loved money and fame over eternal salvation. We face the same challenge today. There are many who oppose the truth; who refuse to hear and believe the truth. What are we to do? We are to keep on doing the task that we set out to do five years ago. We are to continue to preach the Word of God in its truth and purity and administer the sacraments according to Christ's institution in this location. For, it is upon our Lord and what He has done for us and for the whole world that not only the Church in the world is built upon, but this it is the Lord + Jesus and His works and merits for us that this parish is built upon. And by God's grace, we will continue to build this parish upon the rock of our Lord + Jesus for ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, fifty, a hundred and more years. May the Lord + Jesus grant this to us through His unending grace and mercy. Thank be to God for our five years! God's peace be with you! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!